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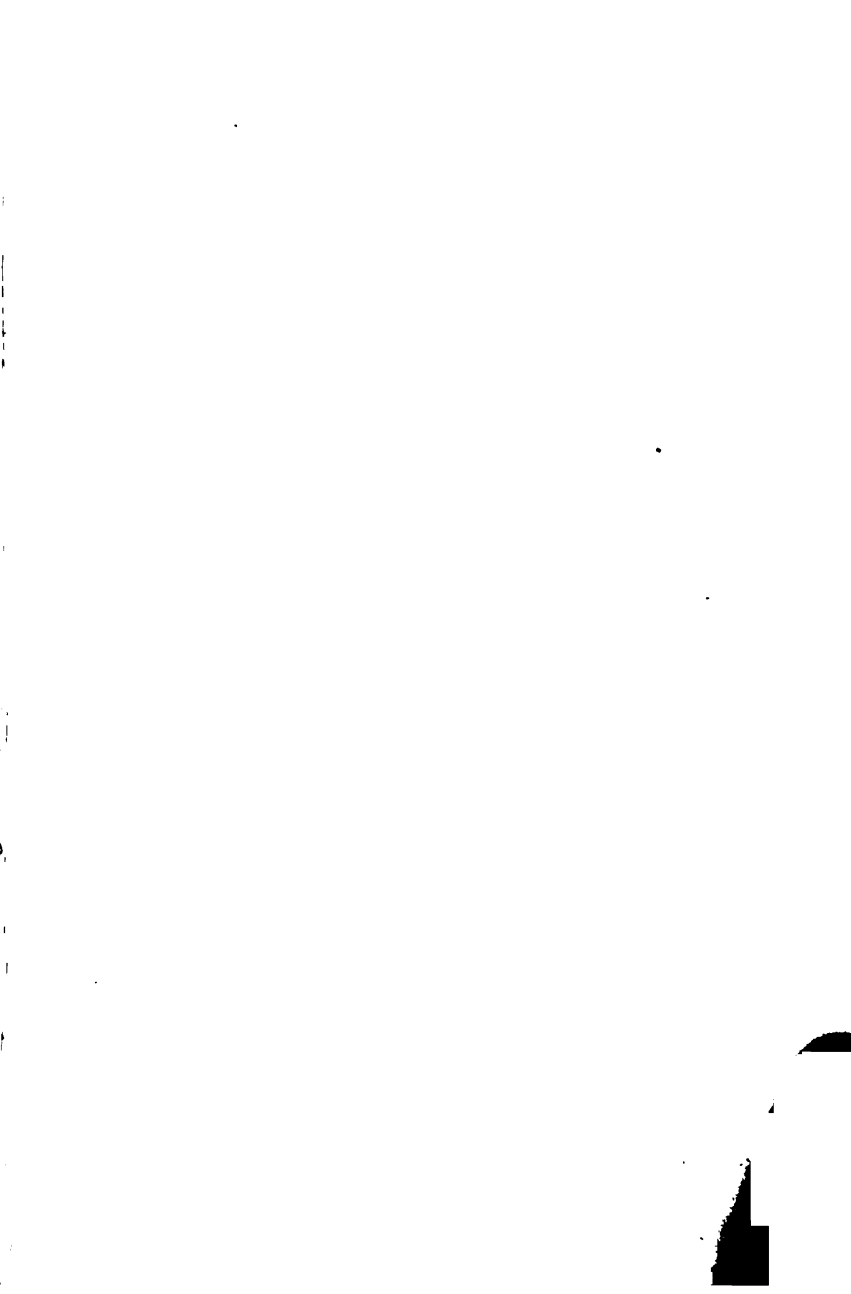

"But the parachute opened at last"

WARRIOR THE UNTAMED

The Story of an Imaginative Press Agent

By

WILL IRWIN

Illustrations by F. R. Gruger

NEW YORK
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WARRIOR, THE UNTAMED

Concerning planted stories, those you think best of never land at all, and those you never give a second thought bring you twenty columns and a raise. There are stories that you plant expecting you 'll have to stand off the reporters like you shrunk from hated publicity, and all you draw is a stick in the news columns and an editorial — no names — about disgusting modern advertising methods. Again, you plant a foolish story when your head is packed with mush. Zip! You 're in the magazines. So it was with this perambulating plant.

We could n't seem to make Paradise Park go. You know Paradise? Down

on the South Shore of Massachusetts — all cheap shows — a dime where they 'd bring a quarter at Coney. It calls for big crowds, or nothing doing in the way of profits. I never drew the pipe so hard in my life as I did that summer, but every time I started anything it fell down. I planted a runaway elephant. The coon with the boathook lost him, and he ate up an apple orchard, and the newspapers did n't bite, and the farmer sued us for damages. I planted a love affair, with a proposal in mid-air, between Naida, Queen of the Empyrean, and Altair, the Peerless. The Boston managing editors inspected it over their glasses and asked in a Harvard accent if I thought they 'd stoop to New York methods. I got plumb foolish with despair and left a veil, a pair of old gloves and a lace hat beside the Frog Pond

on Boston Common. With them I put a circular of the show on which I had written: "All the joy of life was in that sylvan spot, but, alas, it came to me too late!" The copper who found my lay-out worked once with a circus, and he piped off the desk sergeant that it was a plant. The sergeant passed it over to the newspapers just like that, and next morning the papers said in a stick and a half that it was doubtless a sensational attempt to advertise a certain amusement park. Bo, I was in bad.

When in doubt, play the lions. I began to wonder whether I could n't do something with old Warrior, the Untamed King of the Jungle. This Warrior — he 's dead now, rest his dear old hide! — was about as motheaten and decrepit as a lion ever gets. When our story opens he had recently dropped his last

tooth. At half-past four, when the public was invited to see the animals fed, we used to fire in his leg of mutton to Warrior. After he 'd sucked all the juice out of it, his keeper would sneak in at the back door of the cage and bring the Untamed a bucket of beef gruel just to keep his poor old soul and body together.

'T would bring the tears to your eyes, he was that affectionate and grateful over any such little attention. He 'd stop eating any time to have his ears scratched. As Professor Fuller, the world's greatest character reader, used to say, Warrior was short on Destructiveness and Combativeness and long on Benevolence, Philopropogenitativeness and Amatativeness. The only reason we didn 't let him wander as he listed between performances was because we 'd

have had to be kicking him out of our way all the time — he was just that demonstrative. When a lion rubs his head up against your leg, you 're obliged to forget business detail and turn your attention to the softer emotions. The Untamed was born with the circus — heaven knows how many years ago he drew his six columns as the only lion cub ever born in captivity. Sometimes, when we were rubbing his chin and scratching his ears, we used to say that if we turned him loose in his ancestral jungles he 'd die of loneliness and fright — unless he crawled to the humble cot of some native, and snuggled up against the babies, and died of misunderstanding. It was speculating upon these traits of the Untamed that gave me my idea. A lion balloon ascension and parachute jump!

I did n't intend to hoist old Warrior, you understand. What I had in my mind was a fake. Announce it; advertise it. When the balloon is full and Professor Altair comes out in his spangled tights, bring up Warrior, the Untamed, in his cage. Have Professor Altair display the net in which he is going to confine Warrior during their perilous leap for life. To prove that there is no intention to deceive, get the Untamed into the net.

Pad-a-pad-a-pad-a-pad! Whoa! Who is that who bursts through the crowd and cries, "Stop, I shall not let this wild beast out among the little children!" It is none other than Police Captain Donlin of our district, who is drawing his bit from us every month and is glad to do a little favour for his friends. Then the megaphone man announces that the lion ascension has to be post-

poned because the police are prejudiced, but Professor Altair will make a double parachute jump, a feat never before attempted. The papers would have to print that story, I figured, because there would be a police report on it, and because the joke would seem to be on us.

That was the way I planned and programmed it; and after a brief description of some of my obstacles, I 'll tell you just how it did n't turn out.

First, I knew, I had to square it with Hattie Russell; and that was some job. Hattie was the wife of Pete Russell, the lion tamer — or, rather, Pete was the husband of Hattie. Pete was really a brave man. He tamed lions and he married Hattie. You 've heard the circus story about the lion tamer who came home drunk and looked at the bedroom door and shook his head and went down

to the cages and fell asleep among the lions and his wife found him there next morning and shook the bars and hissed, "Coward!" Well, in the business, they say that was Pete and Hattie. The order of Pete's terrors were first Hattie, and afterward all the wild beasts that were ever whelped. Hattie used to be Zora Zuleika, Queen of the Sawdust Ring. She drove High School horses. Then she annexed Pete, and afterward she drove horses *and* Pete. At the time when our story opens she 's a noticeable lady, built in terraces from her chin to her ankles. As for Pete, he 's a mild-eyed and domestic cuss built on the plan of a sliver; and he looks beside her like her big boy doll.

Hattie had one prevailing bug just about this time; and that was Warrior, the Untamed. She and Warrior were

the oldest chums about our show; they 'd trouped together for fifteen years. The season before, she 'd saved all her pennies to get Warrior's picture painted, and poor Pete had to eat opposite *that* three times a day. Now she was saving her pennies to buy a home in Virginia where Warrior, the Untamed, could pass his last days in peace. She never seemed to consider Pete's last days, except to inform him now and then that his 'n would come prematurely if anything happened to that beast on account of his fancy stunts.

It was my first idea to approach Hattie through Pete. But Pete, the craven, turns his back on two vicious leopards that he 's working when I pass the proposition to him, and says: "Say, Billie, would you kiss a buzz-saw just because a friend wanted to see a little sport?"

And he turns careless-like to flick his whip at the ear of a leopard who has just gathered himself for a spring at his neck.

But Hattie was easy. She fell for the first trick I pulled from my bag.

"Say, Hattie," says I, "I wish I knew where we could get a good looking lion with a patient disposition. I want to pull off a stunt!"

"Good looking!" says Hattie; "well, I 'd like to know where you 'll get a better looking lion than Warrior. And as for his disposition ——" For the sake of what was coming, I listened to Warrior's disposition.

"But Hattie!" said I, "'t was always my idea that you wanted to keep Warrior out of the public eye."

"That 's Pete!" snapped Hattie. "The man 's got the notion that Warrior

ain't more 'n half bright. The idea! Why the old beastie understands every word I say. I know what 's the matter with Pete. It 's jealousy, that 's what it is! And let me tell you, he 's got good cause to be jealous!"

And before I got through with Hattie you could n't separate her with dynamite from the idea of a public appearance for Warrior, the Untamed. In the next week, she did everything but manicure him.

"But remember," said Hattie whenever we got on the subject, "that lion don't go up in that parachute!"

"Sure!" I said; "nothing like that."

These words were recalled to me later with additions both searching and cruel.

The day came. We drew our crowd. We marched two bands through the concessions at five o'clock to herd the

populace into Balloon Park. We filled the balloon amid loud cheers, and we got old Warrior, the Man-eater — he moved like a clock in order, he 'd got so used to hiking from cage to cage when the show was on the road — into his net. Finding himself comfortable, and liking the balloon fire, which was warming up his old bones, Warrior, the Untamed, settled down for a nap.

We hitched the net to the parachute and waited for Captain Donlin. He was not there. The balloon filled and puffed up until the volunteers who were holding it had to hang on by their toes. The crowd began to howl for action. Professor Altair went around in his spangled tights testing the ropes and bluffing at making sure that all was well. Still no Captain Donlin. I hurried Pete into an auto, and sent him to

find what the blazes —— When he got back the crowd was rioting. They' d had to rig lines on the balloon to save the arms of the volunteers.

"All off!" says Pete. "There 's a Black Hand murder on, and Captain Donlin has lit out with the reserves!"

"Could n't you get the sergeant?" says I.

"Swears he don't know nothing about it and won't take money," says Pete.

"Well, this sure *is* Boston!" says I.

Right here the crowd set up a howl that shook the luminous ether and woke the Untamed from his nap.

And I saw that we 'd have to hoist that lion or bust.

I took one sneaky look around for Hattie. She was standing on the steps of the Persian Village all gussied up in a purple dress and a new hat and white

gloves — she was out to see her Warrior's public triumph. And oh, she seen it! I figured that she could n't reach me through the crowd in time to stop proceedings; and I made for Professor Altair with my proposition. The fact that I dared propose it with Hattie's eye on me shows how desperate I was.

Professor Altair was a reckless person. He said that the parachute was strong enough to hold them both, and he 'd rather take chances of being dropped or clawed by a lion than face the certainty of being lynched in his own balloon. And before the crowd or even Pete knew what we were doing, the Professor had yelled, "Cut off!" and the balloon had jumped up, and Warrior, the Untamed, was two hundred feet in the air and going some. And over the crowd came one of those feminine shrieks

you read about; and out of the tail of my eye I got a glimpse of a little man in red trousers and a frogged green jacket climbing the fence which divided Paradise Park from the wide, wide world. It was Pete — beating it.

I guess Warrior was about four hundred feet up before he got wide awake and realized that there was no precedent for a lion being in such a spot. The first sign we had of the injury to his finer feelings was when one of his poor old paws came poking through the net just stiff with terror. Then out came another paw and then another, until he 's just a little bundle of yellow, trimmed with the four scaredest legs you ever saw. The crowd was in the breathless stage; and we could hear the Untamed begin to bellow. Of course, being a lion, he had only one note in his voice to express all

his emotions. These bellows of his were a man-eating, child-destroying roar. The megaphone man caught his cue quickly.

"Perceive, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "the awful position of the daring aeronaut. Soul and body hanging between heaven and earth, the perils of the bright empyrean above and a man-eating lion, angered by this unaccustomed affront to his royal dignity, raging below. Yet have no fear; he is secure in the net, and we have made arrangements to secure the mad king of beasts immediately upon his arrival on terra firma. Observe the daring aeronaut. He is about to cut off!"

He was. The balloon had n't been going well under the extra weight. It had started to dip. The Professor made his cut.

You know that first drop of the parachute before it fills — how it takes the

gimp from the oldest balloon man. The load was so heavy that this one made a long drop. My heart jumped as though I was a Rube seeing my first ascension. But the parachute opened at last. And then my heart did jump for fair and keep on jumping.

The Untamed had woke from his trance of terror. He was chewing his way out of the net!

I remember Hattie, who 'd clawed her way to me through the crowd, hanging around my neck, yelling, "Get back, Warrior!" as if he could hear her away up there. And all the while I was watching Warrior's nose come out through the hole he had mumbled with his jaws, and his tail poke through the other hole he had clawed with his hindlegs. Then I saw his whiskers follow his nose, and afterward his mane. The parachute

struck a spot of light air, took a sudden dip, and brought up about twenty feet from the ground; and Warrior, scrambling like a cat in the fly-paper and roaring like an express train, came out of the net and spilled through the air and lit, spread out all on fours.

He did n't exactly seem to light, either. He was away too quick. Just bing! and his feet struck the ground — zip — and he was a yellow streak going over the hill, his old, frazzled tail sticking up in the air and his feet kicking dust in the only run he 'd ever enjoyed in his life. I don't suppose he had any idea where he was going. All he wanted was to put space between himself and a humanity that had betrayed his confidence. He sure *was* putting space between himself and the desperate little man in a green jacket and red trousers who went legging

it after him. They turned into the Zion road. I saw an automobile just rear up on its hind legs and pause there, spinning its front wheels and shooting gasolene. Then the yellow streak went over the summit. The red and green one was still busy behind. It was hard to say whether Warrior in front or Hattie behind had the more to do with Pete's speed. Later we heard Pete's troubles in fiery detail from Hattie; but for the rest of Warrior's troubles that I 'm telling you about, I have to depend on general information and belief.

He struck straight down the Zion road. It was a fine, peaceful Sunday afternoon — an automobile every hundred feet. traps and top buggies sprinkled between, lollygagging couples sparking along the sidewalks, the Dutch consuming beer on the piazzas. The first vehicle that

met him after he cleared the hill was a top buggy. The horse gave three snorts and a jump and brought up with his forefeet in an automobile which pulled up suddenly just behind. The yap who was driving out his best girl went straight over the dashboard into the tonneau, thus forcing on our best families a person who had never been properly introduced. The Untamed, finding his way blocked, took a running jump, cleared the mix-up, and brought up in front of a piazza that was just beery with the Dutch. The Dutch went under the tables as if Jesse James and guns had appeared in the door — all but one little girl. Forgotten and neglected, she sat on top of a table and looked over the railing at Warrior, who 'd stopped to plan his future course, and said, "Nice doggie!" The Untamed considered this

"I saw an automobile just rear up on its hindlegs and pause there"

proposition. Children had always been kind to him. They 'd poked him uneatable peanuts through the bars of the cage and taught him to like peppermints, and I guess he figured that he could exempt this one from the temporary general sour he had on humanity.

But while he 's sidling up to the little girl, presenting his ear to be scratched, a waiter pokes his head out of an upstairs window and begins to endanger the surrounding houses with a .22 revolver. If there was one thing more than another that made Warrior, the Untamed, nervous, it was the sound of a gun. Away back in his cub days they 'd tried to train him, and given him up, he was so good-natured and stupid. He learned then that whenever he got mixed up in his mind, one of those things was liable to go off in his face.

Warrior swoops around with one last, reproachful look at the little girl, who is just being hauled under the table by her aunt, and streaks it, and loses himself in the woods.

According to the newspapers Warrior, the Untamed, spent that night in twelve different places, scattered over an area of fifty square miles. I don't know which of them it was, if it was any of them; but when he made his really authenticated appearance he seemed to be agitated by twin yearnings — a desire for human sympathy, and a burning necessity for beef gruel.

Sin-Killer Gilbert, the shouting revivalist from Georgia, was starting a week of services in the First African Church at Waremouth. All the dark population from Cape Cod and environs was present. Sin-Killer had them going

fine; the shouts and songs floated out to the bushes where Warrior, hungry and misunderstood, was planning his nightly foray for sympathy and beef gruel. If I wanted to touch up this story I 'd stop here to describe the ancestral memories of primeval tropic jungles which those rich African voices woke in Warrior's bosom. Anyhow, he did come out of the bushes, as his track showed, and investigate the First African Church.

Sin-Killer Gilbert was exhorting on the scenery of hell. He had told about hell fires that burn clear through you, and hell snakes that crawl over your bare, black body, and was touching in passing on hell beasts with poison fangs that bite your bones. And right in the middle of his climax, when he had both hands raised up in the air ready to swoop them down to the platform, he

stopped and fixed his eyes and turned a pale green. Then he sank to the floor and crawled under the pulpit, howling, "Not yet, Marse Gabriel; not yet!"

The congregation followed his eyes. Warrior was peeking into the front window. When he saw that he was attracting human attention, he opened his mouth for a glad roar.

They did n't leave a window-pane or a window-sash in the sides or rear of the First African Church. It rained coons. One of the bucks had brought along his gun for social purposes. He cut into the bushes and turned loose at the poor old Untamed, who was slinking away a lot hurt at the loathing he inspired. The shooting finished his disgust; he crawled back to the woods and lost himself in loneliness and hunger.

The next morning we heard from Warrior at Satuit. That 's a nice, quiet little town on the South Shore, half native granger, half summer visitor. They call it the grandest place for a rest between Provincetown and Boston. Perhaps that 's why Warrior, the Untamed, shivering on the verge of an emotional breakdown, picked out Satuit. He seemed to linger there quite a while. First he visited the beach at high tide. All the summer folks were out; the children were paddling about the surf, digging sand, or playing with the dogs; the boys were frolicking on the raft; the women were reading under sun umbrellas. Warrior walked out on to the cliff and surveyed the scene. It called up dear recollections, I guess, of the beach at Paradise Park which he could n't seem to find. When Satuit Beach first perceives

the Untamed, he 's coming down the cliff road in quick, glad leaps.

People who had loathed the water all their lives began to yearn for it. People who swam six strokes became Danielses and Annette Kellermans. People who dassen 't go out above their heads struck straight for the coast of Spain. The whole of Satuit Beach dove together as though the starting gun had just gone off. And the Untamed, staring across the water and making quick side-steps to avoid wetting his feet, perceived that he was still a pariah. To express his grief and disappointment he roared a loud roar and trotted away.

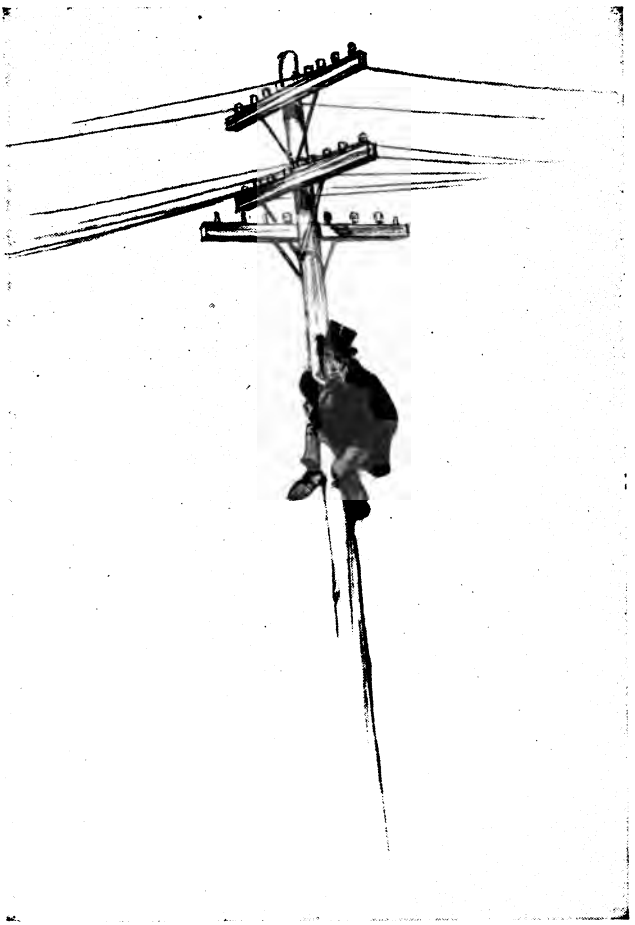
The road from the beach runs to Satuit Harbour, the shopping district of that thriving little metropolis. Warrior, who had slowed down to a walk, emerged with considerable dignity on to the street.

His appearance made its customary hit. Horses pulled up their hitching-posts and went away from that place. Old ladies climbed fences, old gentlemen went up telegraph poles like cats. Doors flew shut, and windows flew open. Warrior, the Untamed, was monarch of untrodden wastes again.

The first place Warrior broke into and entered was Steiner's notion and confectionery store. No beef gruel within smell; but his nose did catch the scent of chocolate peppermints, which the children had taught him to like as a cat likes catnip. Warrior jumped on the showcase with both front feet, broke it, and licked up a box of peppermints from the wreckage. That was putting dessert before soup, but it must have instilled some energy into his poor old bones; for as he came out on the street

he was letting loose roars of satisfaction which scattered the rallying populace again. A butcher wagon had just run away. The front wheels had collided with a milestone, scattering meat in every direction, and a fresh side of beef lay out there in the dust. Warrior took that for a good sign. Sides of beef meant to his simple mind the appetizer to beef gruel. He grabbed it and settled himself for a good time.

Jim Nickerson, the village beau and bowling champion, had a new high-power gun which he employed to scare deer on his vacation up in Maine. Jim got his gun and sneaked from the back door of Perkins's general store, where he 's employed to crank the soda fountain, and up to Odd Fellows' Hall on the third floor. Carefully bolting all the doors, he took a rest on the window-sill,



"Old gentlemen went up telegraph poles like cats"

drew a bead on the Untamed, and shattered the figurehead over Captain Anderson's door across the street. Warrior's frazzled nerves went back on him again. He dropped the side of beef and loped on down the deserted road.

Half a mile from Satuit Harbour is the Miles Standish Inn, a cross between a hotel and a sanitarium. That peaceful morning the old ladies and neurasthenics sat on the piazza playing bridge whist and crocheting and gossiping about the raging lion which was loose in all the newspapers. One of them looked up, and perceived that the lion was in their midst. Business of dropped crocheting and scattered cards and waitresses dragging fainting old ladies up to the second floor, and an heroic proprietor building a barricade of bureaus at the head of the stairs. The Untamed trotted indoors

after them, inspected the baby grand piano, licked off some of the shellac, decided that it was neither appetizing nor sustaining, and crawled toward the kitchen. His face must have lit up at that point, and I know that he let out a roar of joy which set the hysterics cackling upstairs like a string of firecrackers.

He 'd smelled beef broth.

Warrior bounded into the kitchen. There it was, on the floor behind the stove — a whole kettle of soup stock. He poked off the lid with his nose and settled down to business.

While the Untamed is licking out the pot, let us return to our hero. The first day I drew sixteen columns of space in Boston territory, and dozens more from the Associated Press — name of the park in every story. The second day it ran up to a cool twenty-seven. By

Tuesday morning every man, woman and child in Greater Boston and vicinity knew that Paradise Park was on earth and doing business. At the first blush I nearly lost my job. The boss said that women and children would be afraid to come to a resort where wild animals broke loose. But on Monday — Monday, mind you, pretty nearly the poorest day of the week for an amusement park — we took more paid admissions than we 'd taken on any Saturday since we started up. People laid off from their work to see the cage where Warrior, the Untamed, had been confined. You never know how it will jump with the public.

Every country correspondent in New England was my assistant press agent. Citizens were forming posses all along the shore; they were calling on the Governor for militia; they were postponing social

events because they were afraid to go out after dark; farmers ploughed with the musket of Bunker Hill beside them in the furrow, like they expected Paul Revere any minute. And every noise they made was a shout for Paradise Park.

Of course, you understand that it was n't my play to find Warrior until the story of his escape began to run down. Wednesday morning I found I 'd drawn only seven columns; it was time to get busy with a follow-up. The question was: had I better find Warrior or had I better let the story run a day or two more? So far as I was concerned, I had my private feelings; I liked Warrior, and I feared that he might meet someone who could shoot straight. He was n't worth more than six hundred dollars and he 'd given us six thousand in advertising, but there were my finer instincts. Of course,

that 's leaving out Hattie, which is a long sad story with tremulo music on the G string.

I suppose there comes one time in every man's life when he hears from fair lips what a low, crawling creature he is. Hattie's was those lips. She informed me officially that after I found Warrior she 'd never look into my hated face again. There was only one other reptile she esteemed less; and *he* was telephoning to me every six hours for a weather report. Pete said he 'd found a friend who had lent him a citizen's outfit, and he had five dollars on him; when could I send him more?

"Have you seen Warrior?" I 'd begin and "How about Hattie?" he 'd end. And at that point I 'd ring off reassuringly. I got up the nerve to inform Hattie that I 'd heard from Pete. She said:

"You tell him next time he phones that if Warrior ain't found, this continent ain't large enough to hold the two of us!"

When, on her casual visits to inquire for news of Warrior and to air her opinions of men as a class and Pete and me as specimens, Hattie's line of talk ran down a little, I 'd console her by picturing the ceremony which would take place when we found Warrior. I 'd planned to buy off the captors and make it out that we 'd found him ourselves after the whole South Shore had failed. I offered to let her make the capture — bring him back in an automobile — photographs at the gate of the Park with Warrior in Hattie's embrace. That mollified her some. But when I went further and said that I was thinking of making a mystery story of Pete's disappearance I touched off the human hornet's nest again.

"That mutt!" says she. "Have *him* dividing notices with my ol' petty lamb!"

And right there the Untamed clean disappeared from the face of Nature. For thirty-six hours after he loped away from the Miles Standish Inn, he was lost to view and report. Not even a country correspondent broke the spell. I was afraid that he might have died of loneliness and exposure, and that the story would peter out. I tried to stimulate interest by offering a reward of a hundred dollars for information leading to his capture, alive. I wanted to add "or dead" but the grieved, sad face of Hattie Russell came between me and them words, and I gazed apprehensively over my shoulder as I wrote.

Thursday afternoon I was sitting alone in the old man's office speculating on the

disappearance of Warrior and holding a ratification meeting with myself over the increased attendance, when a Cardiff giant of an old girl blew into the office. Fifty, if she was a day, but straight as an arrow, nose like the prow of a ship, and eyes — when she turned those spectacles on you it was like you were facing an automobile searchlight.

"Be you the man that 's running this circus?" she asked.

I said I was, and I came pretty near telling the truth.

"Waal, I guess I 've got a lion up in my house that belongs to you," said she. "You see, I caught him day before yesterday, and I s'pose I should have come down here before this. But I 'd been beach-plummin' an' I 'd got to make jelly right then or those berries would just rot on my hands. As it was, I

thought they never would jell, with me runnin' to the barn every other minute takin' all kinds of soft vittles to that lion. Say, he ain't real well, is he? If those plums had n't a jelled it would have cost you a pretty penny, though."

She stopped here for breath, and I dove up to the surface.

"Yes'm," said I. "How did you happen to catch him?"

"Waal, I 'll tell you. You see, I live by myself, on a little back road, just a piece from Satuit. Kind of lonesome place, but I hate folks callin' an' mussin' up my house. Tuesday mornin' I was out sweepin' the walk. Fur 's I knew, there wa'n't a soul in sight. All of a sudden I heard the beatin'est catouse back of me. I looked around. There was that lion of yours layin' in my hollyhocks. Waal, if I wa'n't mad! Them hollyhocks that I 've

fussed over every minute of this summer! I 'd read in the newspapers about a lion bein' loose, but land! I don't believe half I read in the newspapers, or a quarter. Wa'n't it just my luck havin' that beast pick *my* hollyhocks to lay down on? 'Scat,' I says. 'Git out of here!' Waal, he did n't make no move to obey me — just opened his eyes and looked at me. Mild sort of a beast, ain't he? But my dander was up. I walked over to him and cuffed him good over the ears with my broom. 'You git up off them flowers, you lazy beast!' I says to him. He walked kinder skywollopin', right toward my barn. The horse was out to pasture and the door was wide open to air. He went straight in. I closed the door after him an' left him there. He howled a little — irritated, I s'pose. I never did see such a noisy critter!

"'You git up off them flowers, you lazy beast,' I says to him"

"Waal, I finished my sweepin' an' put my jelly on to bile an' then the thought came to me that the poor beast must be hungry. I tell you, I 've cooked for twenty-five years, but I never met anythin' so pernickity before. Good beans and brown bread he would n't touch, nor fishballs nor doughnuts, but my lands, how he took to my blueberry pies! He was so grateful I gave him a whole three. You should have seen what his whiskers looked like when he got through. Put both feet in the dish and broke my best platter. You 'll hear from that later. But, when all 's said and done, he liked my Irish stew best of everything. He just lopped it up.

"This mornin' I red the house up a little and fixed up a lunch for him — a bucket of Irish stew and a dishpan of stewed blueberries — the poor beast did

seem to like 'em so! — an' I saw your piece in the paper advertisin' for him, an' first I thought I 'd write, an' then I made up my mind to come right down here an' tell you myself. I don't trust the mails more 'n I do the newspapers."

I 'd been sitting there in a trance, just looking at her. Then a grand idea struck me — I was full of them in those days.

"I suppose you know there is a reward coming to you," said I.

"I guess the Tuckers ain't got down so low they 'll take a reward for givin' folks back their own property!" said she.

I sprang my idea.

"I 'll do better than a reward by you. How would you like to come down here and exhibit yourself as the lady that tamed a lion single-handed?

We 'll give you a hundred a week for the season."

She turned those automobile searchlights on me, and for a minute I thought she was going to bite.

"No," she said finally; "I ain't good at that sort of thing, and never was. The Tuckers don't go much on playactin'. I never could say a piece in school without bein' prompted. Besides, I don't want to begin to wear them — tights, I guess you call them — at my time of life. No, you settle my bill of damages an' send a wagon for your lion, an' we 'll just call it a neighbourly favour."

"Gladly, madam," said I. "Will you send me your bill?"

"Oh, I 've got it right here." She began to read from a paper which she took out of her bag. "*To hollyhocks a*

dollar and forty-three cents — that 's as near as I can cal'ulate. That 's allowin' for the seed, an' my work, an' it 's cheap at the price. *To one lion's board and lodging* — I ain't chargin' no more than the Miles Standish House charges — *a dollar and a half. To three blueberry pies* — I got to charge you extra for them because I 'd promised them to the Ladies' Foreign Missionary Fair, an' seein' that they did n't git the pies I 've got to give 'em the money — *seventy-five cents* — ain't them fairs highway robbery? *To one platter* — I bought it with tradin' stamps an' I can't exactly figure that out, but let 's say *sixty-five cents.* Then it 's *twenty cents* for my fare from Satuit to the Junction and *twenty* back. I ain't going to charge you for the trolley ride, I enjoyed it so. *Total, four dollars, seventy-three.* Oh, yes! You can give

me back the ten cents it cost to git into your show. I did n't look at nuthin'. Land of goodness, I b'lieve I 'll miss that beast, after all!"

I paid it.

Only one more scene remains before we leave our characters to their happiness. It came off next day in Hattie's quarters out back of the lion cages. I 'd dropped in with my ears back to see if she 'd heard from Pete — he 'd stopped telephoning, and the animal show needed him. I found Hattie in her ring clothes — make-up, silk riding hat and all, just as she came from her act — teaching a new stitch in Irish crochet to Miss Tucker. Through the window came a snore like the purring of forty thousand cats. Warrior was sleeping it off.

"Where 's ——" I began. Hattie threw a finger to her lips.

"Sh-h!" she said, "you 'll wake him!" Then she went on, whispering, in her best society manner:

"Miss Tucker came back with him, and she 's stopping to have lunch with me. Miss Tucker and I have a great common bond in our love for animals."

Just then I look over Hattie's head and observe the back door opening gradual. And by and by in came Pete's head, followed, when nothing violent happened to it, by the rest of Pete. He was wearing an old, misfit hand-me-down, and he had his red and green ring clothes over his arm.

Hattie's eyes followed mine.

"Mr. Russell," says she to her lord and master, "if you have recovered the first figment of your manhood,

will you kindly go in and beat the head off that black leopard? He's making so much racket that Warrior can't get any rest!"

THE END

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